

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**TRANSFORMING THE GUARD – CONSTRUCT AND CHALLENGES FOR THE
OPERATIONAL RESERVE**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The U.S. Army's success during the 2003 offensive in Iraq, despite a ground element of unprecedented small size, made clear to the world America's supremacy in force-on-force engagements. Subsequent efforts to establish security and implement post-conflict stabilization in Iraq have proven to be the far greater challenge. America's extended campaign to stabilize and secure Iraq, complicated by an insurgency and civil war, has strained our nation's all volunteer force and led to extensive use of the National Guard as an operational - rather than a strategic - reserve. This shift has serious implications for the future roles, force structure, and missions of the Army National Guard. This paper reviews the historical roles of the National Guard and the challenges of becoming an operational reserve; examines pitfalls to implementing modularity and ARFORGEN (Army Forces Generation) in the guard; and outlines the impact of transformation on National Guard state mission execution and civil support.

TRANSFORMING THE GUARD – CONSTRUCT AND CHALLENGES FOR THE OPERATIONAL RESERVE

With the September 11 attacks and subsequent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq...the curtain has been raised on this process of transformation. Americans now see that the National Guard and Reserves are not just waiting in the wings in case the country goes to war, but rather are already an integral part of the military's operational force deployed around the world.¹

—Christine E. Wormuth
Center for Strategic and International Studies

As we mark the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the veracity of Wormuth's assertion becomes ever clearer. The resounding success of the U.S. during combat operations in Iraq, despite a ground element of historically unprecedented small size, made clear to the world the superiority of the American military in force-on-force engagements. Establishing country-wide security and achieving post-conflict stabilization in Iraq, however, have proven to be far greater long-term challenge. Instead of the quick victory and redeployment of troops America had been told to expect, the extended campaign to secure Iraq has strained our nation's all volunteer force and led to extensive use of the National Guard as an operational, rather than strategic, reserve. Regardless of America's long term success in Iraq, post 9-11 requirements for U.S. ground forces abroad have precipitated this significant change in the role of the National Guard.

In addition to utilizing the guard as an operational reserve force, the Active Army is also executing two other major changes under transformation: modularity and ARFORGEN (Army Force Generation). Modularity features conversion to the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) as the base building block for forces, in lieu of the old division-centric system, and is the most significant force structure modification in almost half a century. ARFORGEN is the new rotational readiness model for the Army, replacing the current tiered resourcing system. In the past, application of such sweeping changes within the Army National Guard (ARNG) was often addressed as an afterthought, resulting in incomplete and under-funded implementation. With the guard now serving as an operational force to meet the enormous requirement for U.S. troops abroad, today's senior Army leaders cannot make such mistakes again; the application of modularity and ARFORGEN must be well thought out, fully applied, and seamlessly integrated in the Army National Guard. And even if transformation is executed seamlessly, the second and third order effects on the ability of the Army Guard to execute its unique state mission and provide support to civil authorities are as yet unknown.

This paper reviews the historical role of the National Guard, its transition to an operation reserve, and challenges to its success in that role; examines modularity and Army Force Generation and pitfalls to their implementation in the guard; and outlines the potential impact of transformation on ARNG state mission execution and civil support.

Historical Roles and the Shift to an Operational Reserve

The Enrolled Militia

By far the oldest of the uniformed services, the United States National Guard – in the form of colonial militias – has been defending American life and property for nearly 400 years. The first militias in America were formed as early as 1607 by the Jamestown colonialists, who were attacked by Indian bands shortly after establishing their settlement. After a brutal Indian uprising in March of 1622, the organization became more formal; additional arms were shipped in from England to arm the general citizenry, males between sixteen and sixty could be tapped for militia duty, and legislators levied taxes to pay for arms and equipment.² When the Massachusetts General Court ordered regiments to be formed in 1636, fifteen towns provided companies to fill the first three organized militia regiments in North America, with a combined strength of 1500 men.³ December 13, 1636 has since been recognized as the official birth date of the National Guard. These newly formed units were tested in battle the very next year during the Pequot War. Although victorious in that conflict, the likelihood of further uprisings throughout the northern colonies prompted the Massachusetts leaders to direct each militia company to keep one third of its members on heightened alert, ready to respond within 30 minutes – thus the birth of the colonial “Minuteman”.⁴ The remainder of the 1600’s saw the growth of the so called “enrolled militias”; those citizens carried on the muster rolls and serving in geographically based units throughout the colonies, who maintained security and tenaciously battered down the strength of New England Native American tribes.⁵

The 1700s saw a reduction of enrolled militia activity along the “settled” coasts but an expansion of militia service along the frontier, where outposts and backwoods rangers patrolled the edges of civilization to provide early warning of Indian attack. The eighteenth century also marks the first time that American militia units fought alongside a standing army – the French and Indian War of 1754-1763 featured enrolled militias fighting with British Regulars for domination of the region.⁶ Although successful together in expelling the French, the antipathy that characterized the relationship between the British Army and colonial militias foreshadowed the conflict to come mere decades later. Two decisions by the English monarchy set the conditions for the American Revolution: first, to leave a standing British army in America after

the French and Indian War; and second, to levy taxes on the colonies to pay for both the war debt and its occupation soldiers. The response of the colonial political leadership was to reinvigorate its militias, and form a Continental Congress to oversee and orchestrate collective actions.⁷ Although militia units were moderately successful in the early battles of Lexington-Concord and Bunker Hill, the need for a standing army to fight the British juggernaut was apparent. On 14 June 1775, Congress established the Continental Army and ordered colonies to raise regiments to fill it. All supported the effort, and while a number of militiamen became a part of the "Continental Line", most colonies maintained some semblance of their local militias as well.⁸ The militias would again fight alongside a standing army – this time their own. This "dual American military system" was codified by the U.S. Constitution in 1787, and refined by the Militia Act of 1791, which established an Adjutant General to lead the militia of each state.⁹

The Volunteer Militia

By the 1830's, the growth of the nation's population led to a corresponding increase in the number of enrolled militia members for whom service was mandatory. The diminishing Native American threat in the East, coupled with the inability of the states to effectively arm, train, and employ its enrolled militia members, led to the slow demise of the mandatory enrollment system.¹⁰ In its place "an expanded network of volunteer...companies emerged to infuse the concept of the citizen soldier with renewed vigor."¹¹ Thus came the age of the volunteer militia, comprised of citizens with an affinity for the military lifestyle and centered in mostly urban areas. These volunteers paid for their own uniforms and equipment, to include arms, and often even paid dues to participate with their unit.¹² As these units grew in number and strength, they often sought facilities within the local community to use for drilling, storage of equipment, and social gatherings – direct predecessors to the unit armories of today. It was one of these volunteer militia companies that first adopted the name "National Guard": the 2nd Battalion, 11th Regiment of Artillery in New York voted to rename itself after the 'Garde Nationale de Paris', in honor of the visiting Marquis de Lafayette, French hero of the American Revolution.¹³

These volunteer militias became the backbone of troops supporting the Regular Army during the Mexican War, comprising 75 percent of the total manpower raised for that conflict.¹⁴ This trend continued for the early years of the Civil War, when volunteers made up the bulk of both Union and Confederate forces. Most low-numbered regiments garnered the bulk of their soldiers from previously established militia units. As the war dragged on and casualties mounted to unprecedented heights on both sides, some states eventually re-instated their enrolled militias, demanding compulsory service to meet manpower needs.¹⁵ States continued

to raise both volunteer and enrolled (draft) militia regiments, and they served in a variety of capacities: as volunteer regiments for the Union or Confederate Armies; as 'backfill' troops assigned to guard strategic areas throughout the region; and as exclusively state units designed for limited local service.¹⁶

The Militia becomes the National Guard

After an understandable lull in activity following the Civil War, militia organizations began to reappear in significant numbers by the mid 1870's. The creation of the National Guard Association of the United States in 1878 greatly improved the unity of effort and message of the widely separated state militia units – within a year, most had switched to the regimental structure system, adopted the standard uniform of the Regular Army as their own, increased emphasis on military readiness (over social activities), and incorporated "National Guard" as their official title.¹⁷ Reflecting this change in focus, the presidential call-up for the Spanish-American War required that "all men filling the first volunteer units had to come from existing militia organizations."¹⁸ This was a perceptive move by President McKinley, enabling him to quickly meet a demand for 125,000 trained troops at a time when the active army numbered only 28,000 soldiers. After creditable service alongside the Regular Army in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, the next significant changes to the state militia system came prior to the great conflagration of World War One.

At the turn of the century, two key pieces of legislation - the Militia Act of 1903 and the National Defense Act of 1916 - ushered in the most sweeping change to America's militia system since its inception in 1636. The Militia Act of 1903 directed that state forces be *organized* into regiments and companies of the National Guard and *train to the standards* of the Regular Army. In return units received increased funding, equipment, and – for the first time ever – pay for five days training at summer camp. The National Defense Act of 1916 officially designated the National Guard as "the Army's primary reserve", and formalized guard training cycles into the familiar (and still current) structure of 48 drill periods per year plus 15 days of summer camp. The act also gave the president authority to mobilize the guard for the duration of national emergencies¹⁹, which he did after declaring war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Less than four months later, all 379,701 soldiers of the National Guard were on active duty and training for combat overseas.

As is often the case at the conclusion of a major war, there were significant efforts to reshape the force immediately following WWI. Army plans to completely eliminate the National Guard and establish a Regular Army and Reserve of 500,000 soldiers each were not

successful, and the National Defense Act of 1920 reiterated the role of the NG as the “first federal reserve force” with an end-strength of 435,000. The act also directed that a National Guard officer be the chief of the Militia Bureau within the War Department, and expanded the role of NG officers on the General Staff.²⁰ Further refinements came in 1933, when the “National Guard of the United States” was officially differentiated from the “National Guard of the several States”. Although the language is somewhat arcane, the key element is the *recognition of the guard as having two separate and discrete missions* – one to serve as a permanent reserve component of the Army, and the other to serve the state when needed.

After serving in the role as a “reliable instrument of state power in enforcing domestic laws” by quelling labor disputes during the depression²¹, the guard again saw total mobilization for WWII. National Guard Bureau (NGB) as an institution almost ceased to exist; all its soldiers were absorbed by the Army and only 49 civilians remained in NGB, which came under the control of the Army’s Adjutant General. To deal with the lack of manpower, some states initiated the use of ‘State Guard’ forces to perform disaster relief and support civil authorities,²² filling the void left by guardsmen until the end of the war.

The National Security Act of 1947 saw largest reorganization of the federal government and military in the 20th century, and the modern NGB Headquarters construct was established on October 1, 1948. Perhaps the first ‘joint’ headquarters of the modern military, both Army and Air Divisions were placed together under the Chief, NGB.²³ Korea saw 110,000 troops, four guard divisions, and hundreds of smaller units mobilized for war, but then over half the activated troops were pulled out of their guard unit to serve as individual fillers for the Regular Army. For Vietnam only one mobilized Army Guard unit deployed into country, and approximately 9000 guardsmen served as individual volunteers. In 1973, the end of the draft made the guard and reserves the nation’s “initial, primary, and sole augmentation to active forces.”²⁴ Following Vietnam, Army Chief of Staff General Creighton W. Abrams Jr. conducted a massive rebalancing of forces between active and reserve components and implemented the Total Force policy; the rebalancing guaranteed that the next major campaign would require mobilization of the guard and reserve as a hedge against military involvement without popular support, and the Total Force policy mandated closer coordination between components. While the speed and scope of the First Gulf War did not require massive mobilization and deployment of NG units, it led to the activation of over 62,000 soldiers and service by 398 Army Guard units. The first steps in the transition from serving as a strategic reserve to serving as an operational force had been taken.

Strategic Reserve to Operational Force

From the early colonial period to today, the National Guard has filled three distinct, critical roles: protecting life and property; enforcing our nations laws; and providing forces to augment the “standing” or active Army. This last role, augmenting the active force, has recently shifted from a strategic orientation – in which a reservist might be mobilized only once or twice in a 20 to 30 year career²⁵ – to a truly operational utilization paradigm. One has only to review ARNG troop deployments since 1990 to see the shift: Operation Desert Storm; Somalia; Horn of Africa; Haiti; Sinai; Balkans; Operation Enduring Freedom; and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Mobilizations at home for post-9/11 events include: force protection at military sites and airports throughout the country; Operation Noble Eagle (ONE); Hurricane Katrina; and Operation Jump Start (OJS) providing security along the Mexican border.²⁶ The number of duty days served by RC members has skyrocketed as well, from approximately one million man-days per year in the 1980’s to 12 million man-days by 2000²⁷, and to over 64 million man-days per year by 2003.²⁸

Employment of the guard for these and other missions was done out of exigency, not a desire to provide the reserves with operational experience. As evidenced by the myriad missions listed above and confirmed as official defense policy by the February 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report²⁹ and the U.S. Army 2007 Posture Statement³⁰, the National Guard is now an oft-counted on operational force, whose personnel and capabilities are a needed and integral part of the all-volunteer Army for virtually any sustained military engagement across the full spectrum of operations. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) concluded in its July 2006 study entitled “The Future of the National Guard and Reserves”, “DoD [Department of Defense] cannot meet today’s operational requirements without drawing significantly on the Reserve Component.”³¹

The shift to serving as a truly operational reserve will challenge the traditions of the citizen soldier as never before. The “one weekend a month and two weeks each summer” paradigm, instituted as part of the National Defense Act of 1916³² and promulgated for the past 90 years, has been shattered.



Figure 1. National Guard Vehicle in OIF

While figure 1 shows soldiers making light of the new reality for guardsmen, the implications of this change to the “social compact”³³ between the government and the soldier, their family, and their employer are serious and far reaching. Predictability of deployments, compensation for service, soldier and family care, and myriad other issues will need to be addressed to maintain the strength and readiness of the NG. In the near term, however, there are two critical areas of particular concern to the strategic success of the ARNG as an operational reserve: recruiting and retention, and employer support.

Recruiting and Retention

Successful recruiting for the operational National Guard will require new, innovative approaches and leadership focus to attract and maintain quality personnel. The negative impact of more frequent deployments on ARNG recruiting is obvious: the guard missed its recruiting goals in 2004, 2005, and 2006 – every full year since the start of OIF. The most significant shortfall came in 2005, when recruiters missed their goal by an enormous 20%, enlisting only 50,219 of a targeted 60,002 soldiers.³⁴ This abysmal performance sent shockwaves throughout the ARNG, and left a gap between force structure allowance and end strength of almost 43,000 soldiers – the largest in over a decade.³⁵

The answer to solving the recruiting puzzle for both the active force and reserves has thus far been twofold: vastly increase the size of the recruiting force, and “incentivize” recruitment by offering a lucrative benefits package (often with a significant bonus) that is competitive with civilian options available to the target audience. After implementing these steps, guard recruiting has taken a significantly upward trend; by the end of 2006, the Army Guard missed its target by a scant 1%, and is currently at 105% of its goal for 2007.³⁶ Most recently, the creation

and implementation of the Guard Recruiter Assistant Program (G-RAP) has paid huge dividends. Under the program, guard soldiers can receive up to \$2000 when an individual they refer for recruitment enlists in the ARNG; \$1000 when the soldier ships to basic, and another \$1000 when the new enlistee completes advanced individual training. LTG Clyde A. Vaughn, Director of the Army National Guard, credits G-RAP with his component's remarkable recruiting turnaround from 2005 to today.³⁷ Of particular note is the recent adoption of the key G-RAP bonus elements across all Army components – Active, Guard, and Reserve. Whether the success of G-RAP and other recruiting initiatives can be sustained over the long term is yet to be determined. In any case, acquiring soldiers for an operational reserve adds additional challenges to the already difficult and often thankless job of recruiting.

Thus far, the increased ARNG deployments do not appear to be driving retention numbers significantly lower. The feared mass exodus of soldiers from the guard in the wake of OEF and OIF has not occurred. There was a slight increase in attrition for 2006, but it stayed well within the 'acceptable' parameters set by NGB, and the long-term trends indicate a fairly stable rate of loss over the past three years.³⁸ In an approach similar to that in recruiting, significant reenlistment bonuses are being offered to keep soldiers in the Army for subsequent tours of duty. Reenlistments while deployed to a combat theater are especially lucrative, offering an additional cash bonus. After a brief period during which combat tour bonuses were suspended for some ARNG soldiers while program details were ironed out, the program has continued with robust success. One area that does raise some concern is the increased loss of mid-career NCOs and captains. The downward retention trend for these key leaders – who are bearing the brunt of close combat and multiple tours of duty for OIF and OEF – has recently been acknowledged by some senior army leaders.³⁹ Although the data is currently anecdotal and requires more accurate analysis to identify long-term trends, it is certainly an indicator worth watching.

Employer Support

The increased use of the NG as an operational reserve will most certainly impact employers of guard soldiers. Even under the old paradigm of service – one weekend a month and two weeks each summer – soldiers occasionally experienced problems when work and guard commitments conflicted. Such issues were usually worked out through good communication and a little 'give and take' between the unit commander and employer. Recent evidence, however, points to growing reluctance on the part of employers to hire and retain employees who admit that they are in the guard. An informal poll by Workforce Management Magazine indicated that 51 percent of employers "would not hire a citizen-soldier if they knew

that...member could be called up and taken away from their job for an indeterminate amount of time.”⁴⁰ Such a stance reflects not only the impact of ongoing deployments of guard personnel, but an understanding that the nature of NG service has changed for good.

Employer fear of lost productivity and workforce disruption resulting from higher NG operations tempo is well founded. For most RC soldiers, serving one year “boots on the ground” in country became 16-18 months away from home and work when pre-mobilization time, mob-site training and certification time, and de-mobilization time were added in. The piecemeal nature and unpredictable timing of NG deployments since the commencement of OIF resulted from the ‘ad hoc’ filling of force demands from theater instead of using pre-planned unit decrements. This reflects the strategic change from the Time Phased Force Deployment Decrement (TPFDD) process in JOPES to the more free-form Global Force Management Request for Forces process. The lack of a predictable rotational schedule has affected both active and reserve components, and resulted in increased anxiety for guard soldiers and their employers over “if, when, and how long” they will deploy. Senior defense officials have recently acknowledged this problem and taken several steps to address it. In a memorandum dated 19 January 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates outlined new guidance for “Utilization of the Total Force”, with three key elements for the reserves: first, it limits the duration of involuntary mobilization for members of the Reserve Forces to a maximum of one year at any one time; second, that guard forces will now be mobilized as whole units; and third, that the “planning objectives” for deployment rotation for the Reserves is 1:5 (one year deployed for every 5 years at home). To his credit, Secretary Gates did caveat the 1:5 deployment cycle by stating that current “global demands will require a number of selected Guard/Reserve units to be remobilized sooner than this standard”.⁴¹ While the SECDEF’s memo brings clarity to the length of RC deployments, and targets how frequently NG soldiers should be deployed, there is a complicating factor at play: almost concurrent with this new guidance came a change in DoD policy that removed the previous limit of 24-months (total) that a reservist could be involuntarily deployed without presidential authorization. In other words, National Guard soldiers (and their families and employers) will see deployments of shorter duration – 1 year maximum with limited exceptions – but they also face the prospect of multiple deployments as ‘global demands’ dictate. While the jobs of deployed servicemen and women are protected by The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)⁴², repeated mobilizations will ultimately damage the employability of guard personnel.

Modularity and ARFORGEN in the ARNG

Modularity

Although the U.S. military has historically been resistant to large-scale change, the force transformation initiated under Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric Shinseki and aggressively accelerated across the DoD by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld has become the 'norm' for all services. Within the Army, the ongoing transformation elements of modularity and ARFORGEN represent the most significant force structure and readiness initiatives in over 60 years. The adoption of the brigade as the base building block for forces – vice the division – is designed to create base “modules able to ‘plug into’...task forces in expeditionary and campaign settings.”⁴³ Rather than send entire divisions (which often carried much unneeded force structure along) to a theater of operations, the Army can now tailor its response with an appropriate mix of brigades to meet the threat. The overarching goal of this flexible ‘plug-and-play’ concept is to enable a more tailored force to deal with the variety of traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive threats around the world.

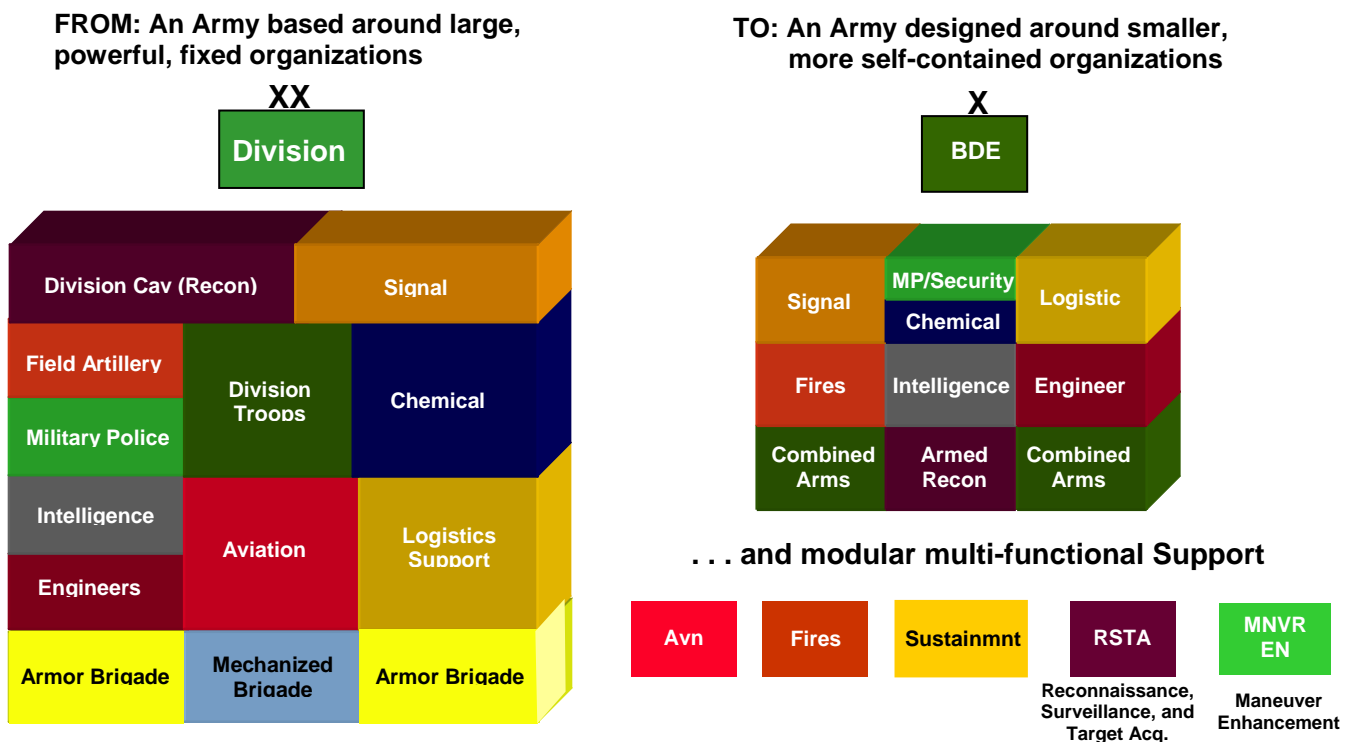


Figure 2. Building Blocks of the Division and the New Modular Brigade Combat Team

Under the current plan, the Army will create a rotational pool of 76 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) supported by approximately 225 Support Brigades.⁴⁴ The ARNG piece of the

final modularized force structure will consist of 28 Brigade Combat Teams and 78 support brigades / groups.⁴⁵ Once all units are converted to the modular design, the goal under the ARFORGEN cyclic readiness model (discussed below) is to be able to deploy and sustain up to 18 BCTs, 14 Active and 4 National Guard, on a steady-state basis.⁴⁶ While the plan for conversion to the Modular Force did consider guard-specific issues prior to and during implementation, there are still a number of considerations which impact its full implementation and effectiveness. Among these are the total number of National Guard BCTs; costs of modular conversion; and National Guard equipment shortfalls issues.

Disagreement over the number of BCTs that should reside in the ARNG started well before the first unit ever went modular, and continues today. The original Army modularity plan called for 37 traditional ARNG brigades to transform into 34 BCTs, which was further reduced to 28 as part of the 2006 QDR. The cut was viewed by some as a blatant attempt by the Army to take back combat force structure, and by others as a simple administrative adjustment to reflect the guard's actual end strength shortfall of 13,000 soldiers (337,000 on hand, 350,000 authorized).⁴⁷ Perhaps the most accurate and dispassionate point of view can be found in the CSIS "Future of the National Guard and Reserves" study. It claims that "in light of likely known requirements and the need to be able to respond to major unforeseen events, combined with the level of inherent risk associated with the transition to an operational reserve", 28 ARNG BCTs are inadequate⁴⁸. The CSIS recommended 34 NG BCTs as the end-state for modularity to ensure the Army could meet its commitments with an acceptable amount of risk to the overall force.⁴⁹ Given today's intense pressure on the total force, incredibly short dwell time for active duty units, and demands of the ongoing surge of troops in and around Baghdad, the CSIS recommendation appears especially prescient.

In light of the 2006 QDR cut to the number of ARNG BCTs, which some say was a cost cutting measure, concern over funding for full conversion to modularity across total force is warranted. Many in the guard are skeptical that the costs of conversion will be met for the entire force, leaving the last brigades to be converted – those in the NG and reserves – left holding the bag. This fear is, however, misplaced. According to LTG N. Ross Thompson III, former Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation, HQDA G-8, funding for modular conversion is included in the Army's base budget through 2013, and is in no way reliant on any of the robust supplemental funding the Army receives for operations in OEF and OIF⁵⁰. While Army budgeting is by no means a fixed process, and funds earmarked for one program are often pulled to satisfy near-term requirements, the central nature of modularity to Army transformation

and its' inclusion in the base budget signal a strong commitment to complete the process across all components.

Despite the good news of full base-budget funding for modularity, there is an 'elephant in the living room' that is poised to cause serious issues for implementing modularity (and ARFORGEN) in the ARNG – equipment. Vastly higher usage rates on all vehicles and daily losses to enemy action or accident are taking a staggering toll on the Army's equipment in theater. Supplemental budget funding, intended to pay for the actual costs of operations in OEF and OIF, has helped to some degree. The reserves received \$2.94 billion in the 2007 bridge supplemental to replace RC equipment that was transferred to the Active Component or left behind in theater. While \$2.94 billion is a great deal of money, it is only a start; RC leaders project that it will take an additional \$13 billion in reset funding for FY08 and \$13.9 billion in FY09.⁵¹ What isn't addressed by the conversion to modularity (or Army budgets) is the historical equipping of the National Guard by cascading older, often outdated equipment from the active force. ARNG leaders knew full well the realities of the old tiered resourcing system, but accepted the lack of modern equipment as part and parcel of serving as the nation's strategic reserve. With that model now invalid, and guard units now expected to serve alongside their active counterparts at the start of every major operation, another answer for how to equitably equip all components must be found.

The ARFORGEN Model

ARFORGEN, or Army Force Generation, is the new cyclic readiness model for the Army, replacing the former tiered system of readiness. Under the old system, leaders recognized that fiscal reality made it impossible to resource all units at 100% across the Army. The tiered system managed limited resources by fully funding only the highest tier units; those lower in priority received funding for only a percentage of their requirements, creating a world of "have's" and "have not's", even in the AC force. Risk was assumed for the less resourced units that deployed later to support the big fight. Under tiered readiness, virtually all units in the Army National Guard received considerably less funding than their AC counterparts, creating an entire component of "have not's". Even the guard's highest priority units, the much-vaunted Enhanced Separate Brigades, received fewer resources or were fielded later than comparable AC units. This construct acknowledged the guard role as a strategic reserve that was not expected to participate in the early stages of a conflict, and prioritized resources accordingly. The onset of the Global War on Terror, the change of the reserves to an operational force, and the huge long-term force requirements for OEF and OIF have made tiered readiness obsolete.

The ARFORGEN model divides forces into three pools: the reset/train pool, the ready pool, and the available pool. The purpose is to provide a “structured progression on unit readiness, resulting in recurring periods of available trained, ready and cohesive units prepared for deployment.”⁵² Units will now be resourced according to where they are in the rotation, with the available pool receiving all the funding, tools, and equipment necessary for deployment worldwide; the ready pool will have a mix of units, resourced and trained to conduct all or most wartime missions; and the reset/train pool will have a mix of units just returning from deployment (with equipment in reset and high personnel turnover) and others forming up with people and equipment to begin cohort unit training.

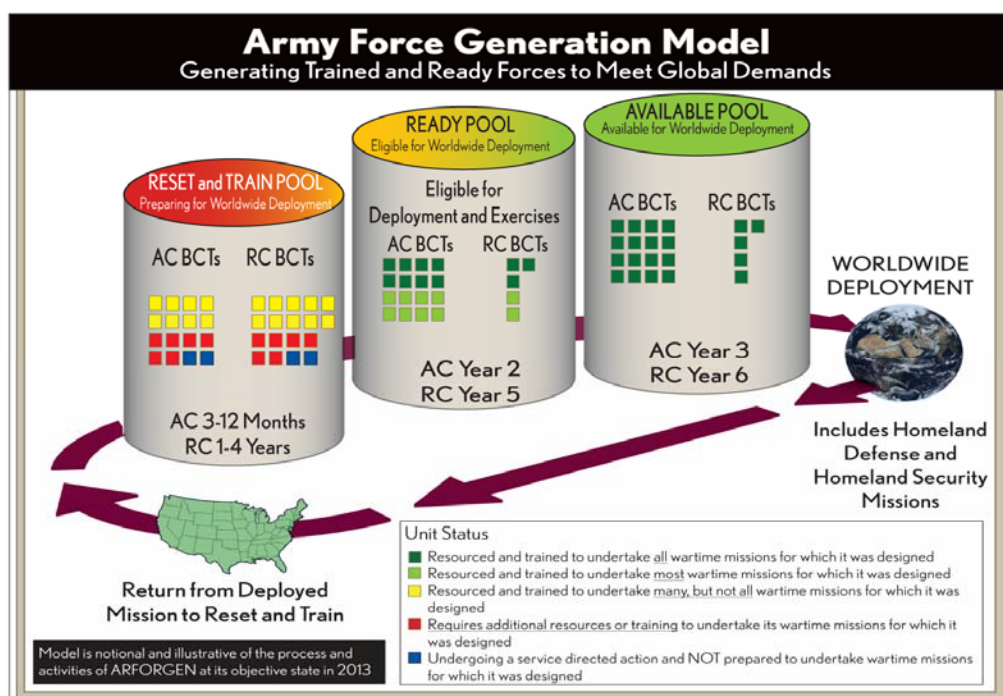


Figure 3. ARFORGEN Cyclic Readiness Model

The benefits of such a system are readily apparent: a rotational system puts maximum resources into units that are headed into the fight regardless of component; it postures the force for ongoing, sustained commitments around the world; and it offers predictability of mobilization windows to soldiers and their families.

For the guard, the most significant shift is from the cold war mobilization pattern of “Alert, Mobilize, Train, Deploy” to the ARFORGEN model of “Train, Alert, Deploy”. This is designed to translate into fewer demands on guard soldiers for the early part of the reset/train phase to assist reintegration to the civilian workforce, followed by ‘normal’ service demands during the

latter part of reset/train. The fourth year in ARFORGEN would demand higher than the typical operational tempo as guard units lock in personnel, execute collective training events, and are validated for deployment. The fifth year would bring actual deployment or readiness to quickly respond to homeland defense or state missions as required.

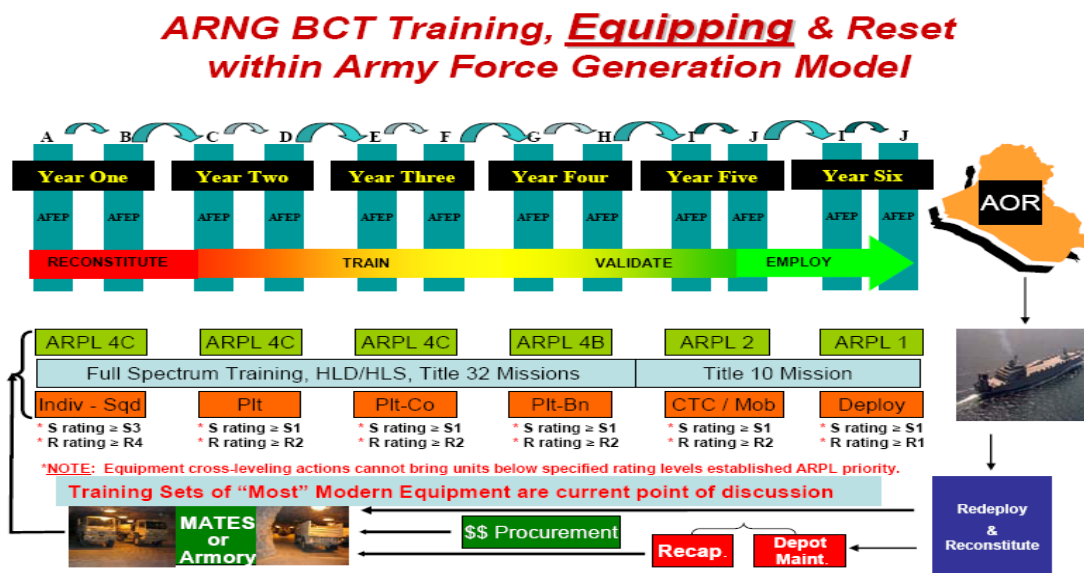


Figure 4. Original ARNG ARFORGEN Cycle (adjusted by the Army to a 5-yr target cycle)

While the theoretical application of the ARFORGEN model appears sound, conversion to it is proving to be less than ideal. The initial cycle goals, shown above as 1:3 AC and 1:6 RC, have officially been reduced to 1:2 AC and 1:5 RC by the Army. SECDEF Gates' letter acknowledges these ratios as goals, and concedes that demands for forces (including the surge in Baghdad, which now may stretch into FY 2008)⁵³ have driven the numbers to 1:1 or less on AC, and well below 1:4 for many RC units. In essence, there exist only two of the three ARFORGEN pools – reset/train and available – and units are spending as little as 9 months in reset/train before being deployed again. The small number of BCTs in the current Army force structure means there is no 'slack' in the system, and worldwide force requirements allow no time for a BCT to sit idle and uncommitted in the ready pool.

In addition to this wrinkle in converting to ARFORGEN, we must examine guard-specific manning, training, or equipment issues that could threaten the overall success of the model. Manning is likely the least problematic – as discussed earlier, even with unpredictable mobilizations of varying length since 2001, guard recruiting and retention have recently rebounded and appear to be on track for the foreseeable future. The promise of shorter, more predictable deployments under ARFORGEN should only ease this issue. Fear of a mass

exodus from ARNG units prior to year four of the cycle (at which point RC units are “alerted” and assigned soldiers stop-lossed) is also unwarranted. Most, if not all, guard units have had advanced notice of alerts through close communication between the state and NGB, resulting in the loss of only a minute percentage of soldiers seeking to avoid deployment.⁵⁴ The predictability of deployment cycles under ARFORGEN will only enhance the retention of soldiers who make up the vast majority of guard units today – those who wish to train and serve. And while ARFORGEN does not reduce the overall commitment of time that a soldier serving in the ‘operational’ guard gives to state and nation, the increased predictability that the cycle offers should help eliminate doubt from employers’ minds as to when their citizen-soldier will be gone from work.

The more predictable training cycle within ARFORGEN is also likely to enhance, rather than hinder, unit proficiency. The first three years of the cycle will be similar to current drill and AT patterns. Soldiers will have increased visibility as to what phase of training they are in, and leaders better able to focus on proficiency at the appropriate level. The fourth year will indeed require a higher training tempo in order for units to finish the year validated for T10 deployment. The tradeoff that ARFORGEN offers here is one most traditional guard soldiers would be willing to make – increased training commitments at home station for the year prior to deployment in return for only a single year deployed. “Better than six months wasted at a mobilization station”, most guard soldiers would say.

The primary challenge with ARFORGEN in the guard is equipment. Sincere doubts exist that the Army can acquire and maintain enough sets of modern equipment for units in all three ARFORGEN pools to operate with. The robust supplemental funding bills received for operations in OEF and OIF have covered combat losses, and even enabled the Army to make some headway on equipment upgrades and modernization. However, this funding in no way addresses the shortage of modern equipment in the National Guard caused by decades under the tiered readiness system. To cover these shortages (exposed by employment as an operational reserve) the ARNG transferred more than 100,000 pieces of equipment from non-deployed to deploying units by mid-2005. As a result, only 60% of stateside Army Guard units reported having the minimum required equipment on hand, much of which was ‘in lieu of’ equipment suitable for training but not for overseas deployment.⁵⁵ More recent studies claim that up to 88% of ARNG units in the states “are not combat-ready” due to equipment shortages.⁵⁶

As evidence of serious equipping shortfalls mounts, calls for action by state leaders are being echoed by many at the federal level. Senior ARNG leaders, Congressmen, and even the

Government Accountability Office⁵⁷ are adding to the growing pressure on the Army to adequately address the issue. To succeed as an operational reserve force, guard units must be funded and fielded with modern equipment on par with the AC to the greatest extent possible. Failure to do so will condemn the ARNG to perpetually “rob Peter to pay Paul”, never fully integrate into the ARFORGEN model, and leave the guard unable to adequately fulfill its state and civil support missions.

State Missions and Civil Support

Myriad challenges confront the ARNG as it transitions to an operational reserve, executes modularity, and adopts the ARFORGEN model. While the pitfalls examined thus far are many and daunting, the guard will most likely do what it has done for centuries – fight for what it needs, and make do with what it receives. If one assumes that the key issue of equipment will be satisfactorily addressed, the ARNG will be a fully modularized force operating within all three ‘pools’ of ARFORGEN by 2013⁵⁸. While not immediately apparent, this change will have both positive – and negative – impacts on the Army Guard’s ability to execute state missions and provide Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), its supporting role in Homeland Security.

The benefits of a modularized and modernly equipped guard to support state missions are self-evident. Every governor in the nation would prefer the most modern helicopters for wild-land firefighting or search and rescue missions; local emergency managers would certainly like their guard units to have newer, more capable tactical vehicles to respond during floods, snowstorms, or other natural disasters; and State Adjutants General would certainly prefer modular headquarters that can command and control multiple units that “plug in” with medical, engineering, or other key capabilities for consequence management of a terrorist attack or large-scale mass casualty event. These advantages are, however, offset by complications from other elements of transformation.

When one looks at the larger picture of the ARNG after transformation – specifically the rotational cycles under ARFORGEN and repeated deployments as the Army’s operational reserve – areas of concern arise. One apprehension is the ability to fully support state missions in the face of both increased unit deployments and long periods of ‘planned unreadiness’ during reset/train cycles. The potential ‘one two punch’ of having major units deployed out of state while units back home lack personnel and equipment is alarming to state leaders. One need only call to mind Louisiana’s 256th BCT, which was deployed in Iraq when Hurricane Katrina destroyed the gulf coast, to know that such circumstances can and will occur.⁵⁹ The political firestorm surrounding the national response for Katrina was exacerbated by the commitment of

local guard units to their federal mission and not available to help at home, despite the massive DoD response.

One way in which this risk is mitigated is the distributed nature of ARNG units themselves; force structure spread throughout 54 states and territories is itself a structural defense against the likelihood that a single state would have the majority of its guard assets unready at any one time. Also, NGB has set a baseline goal of 50% unit availability to the states⁶⁰, and where possible attempts to evenly distribute unit deployment nominations within the constraints global force requirements. This goal will be increasingly difficult to meet as more guard force structure is mobilized for deployment, and is complicated by the fact that half of the force identified for state and homeland defense missions will be in the reset/train pool of ARFORGEN.

Another method to ensure emergency missions at home have adequate NG support is state-to-state agreements. Similar to mutual aid agreements between local authorities, state compacts spell out what support one state will provide another during an emergency, and are often tailored for regionally specific missions such as wild-land firefighting and search-and-rescue. The most formal of these compacts, recently signed by all 50 states⁶¹, is the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The EMAC provides established procedures through which “a disaster impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently”. Key elements, such as liability and reimbursement, are already agreed upon in the EMAC⁶², eliminating the need to negotiate during a crisis. The flexibility provided by EMAC is essential to states whose force structure is either deployed or in the early part of reset/train, enabling them to provide assets and execute critical state and civil support missions.

Going well beyond current force transformation plans, some have called for the National Guard to fill a significantly different role in Homeland Defense. Frank G. Hoffman of the Foreign Policy Research Institute argues that the guard should convert of three of its divisions into 12 Security Enhancement Brigades, for service as a new Homeland Security Corps.⁶³ Others, citing the imperative of DoD Directive 3000.05 (which made stability operations a core mission for the U.S. military and gave it a priority equal to combat operations)⁶⁴, have called for the 8 ARNG modular division headquarters to become ‘Nation Building Division Headquarters’, focused primarily on phase 4 and 5 operations.⁶⁵ While admittedly “outside the box” ideas, these proposals do not properly acknowledge the realities of ARNG force structure allocation and funding. The guard is able to perform its constitutionally-mandated state mission in large part due to funding and equipment it receives for its Title 10 federal mission. Large scale migration of ARNG combat force structure to a strictly U.S.-based homeland defense / security

role would be sheer folly – it would separate the guard from its federal mission and the active component, and risk the loss of readiness, relevance, and resources. While some guard forces have taken on new missions with strong application at home such as Counter-Drug Detachments, Weapons of Mass Destruction – Civil Support Teams, and CERFP's (Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force Packages), these elements are small, congressionally mandated, and capable of directly serving a Title 10 federal mission when called upon to do so. Senior ARNG leaders have wisely chosen to meet expanding Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) requirements by expanding the mission set of existing or future-planned force structure, not by creating exclusively homeland-oriented guard units.

The next few years promise an expansion of guard deployments abroad and the widening of mission sets at home. The classic “do more with less” mantra is no longer acceptable, nor should it be. ARNG leaders must execute a strong campaign of expectation management: realistically portraying to federal and state leaders what missions they can – and cannot – accomplish while modularity, ARFORGEN, and high deployment tempos continue.

Conclusion

The force demands of the global war on terror have become immense. Operation Iraqi Freedom, the first extended U.S. military campaign since the end of the cold war, has stretched the all-volunteer military towards its limit and mandated large scale activation of the reserves to relieve pressure on the active force. As a result, the National Guard stands at a decisive point in its evolution, transitioning to an operational reserve for the first time in its 370 year history. This change is replete with challenges; how to recruit and retain a quality force in the face of a high deployment tempo, and how to meet the increased time demands of military service while sustaining a civilian career as a citizen soldier. The social compact between the government and the guardsman is in a state of flux, necessitating significant changes in policy to address the shifting nature of NG service.

Added to this milieu are the transition to the Modular Force and implementation of the ARFORGEN readiness cycle, the two central pieces of Army Transformation. These elements offer increased funding and modern equipment for the guard to assist in fulfilling its new operational role. Funding for these initiatives is on track and only minor stumbling blocks appear ahead with one significant exception – equipment. Additional financing, acquisition, and fielding of ARNG equipment is absolutely critical to the long-term success of the guard in ARFORGEN. Without it, the ARNG will remain in the vicious and unsustainable cycle of cross

leveling equipment from unit to unit as deployment demands dictate. America's operational reserve force deserves – indeed requires – more to achieve and sustain success in the 'long war' against global terrorism.

And while the nature of guard service has changed forever, it is essential that the ARNG as a component keep its force structure and mission closely aligned with the active army. Even though "homeland defense is job number one"⁶⁶ for the guard, the ARNG must maintain its core combat and combat support competencies, while expanding the capabilities of emerging force structure (such as the Functional, Multifunctional, and Maneuver Enhancement Brigades) to execute homeland defense and DSCA missions. Any grand departure risks a separation from the Army we support, and from whom we derive our federal mission and resources.

The expansion of the Army National Guard federal role and increase in requirements for homeland defense bring both challenges and opportunities alike. The Guard is currently on the glide path to success, meeting significant deployment demands while simultaneously transitioning to a modern, modular force. Long-term success, however, is by no means guaranteed. It will take continued political support in Congress, persistence by Army and National Guard leaders, and strong commitment by the American people to see transformation fully implemented – and sustained – in the ARNG.

Endnotes

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⁴⁶ Wormuth, 17.

⁴⁷ Wormuth, 20.

⁴⁸ Wormuth, 18.

⁴⁹ Wormuth, 18. Of note here is the other half of the CSIS recommendation, which has since been implemented: that the Active force should increase its number of BCTs to 48, up from the original goal of 42. Even though the President called for an increase in the size of the Army and Marines Corps during the 2007 State of the Union address, it is as yet undetermined if the ARNG will garner additional Combat BCTs.

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